

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 IO-15 EB-11 USSS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-15 ACDA-19 SCS-03 SCA-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00

OPR-02 SY-10 DRC-01 CCO-00 OC-06 /172 W

----- 054076

O 091420Z OCT 73

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2996

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, YS

SUBJECT: DIVERSION OF BRITISH AIRWAYS PLANE TO ADEN

REF: STATE 199745

1. CONGEN FURNISHES FOLLOWING INFO BASED ON MORNING PRESS ARTICAL
OCTOBER 9 AND CONVERSATION WITH MARKETING MANAGER JOHANNESBURG
BOAC OFFICE, MR. RANCE.

2. ACCORDING TO JOHANNESBURG'S RAND DAILY MAIL OF OCTOBER 9,
TWO SOUTH YEMENI MIG FIGHTERS FORCED BA 033 LONDON-JOHANNESBURG
FLIGHT TO LAND ADEN AIRPORT WHERE IT REMAINED THREE HOURS. FLIGHT
HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DIRECTED TO BAHRAIN IN ORDER SKIRT MIDDLE EAST
FIGHTING. PRESS STATES 139 PASSENGERS WERE ABOARD. (THIS CLARIFIED
TO READ 139 JOHANNESBURG-BOUND PASSENGERS.)

3. YEMENI AUTHORITIES GAVE NO REASON FOR FORCING LANDING BUT SOME
PASSENGERS OPINED AIRCRAFT HAD FLOWN OVER SECRET MILITARY AIRFIELD.

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ACCORDING PASSERNGER, BOAC PILOT BANKED STEEPLY AND BEGAN IMMEDIATE

DESCENT WHEN APPROACHED BY TWO FIGHTERS. CAPTAIN TOLD PASSENGERS FLIGHT HAD BEEN REQUESTED LAND ADEN AND THERE NO CAUSE FOR ALARM.

4. ACCORDING FURTHER PASSENGER REPORTS CONTAINED PRESS, YEMENI AIRPORT AUTHORITIES COMPLETELY BEFUDDLED WHEN JUMBO LANDED. HAD NO STAIRS HIGH ENOUGH REACH 747 DOORS AND HAD USE TRACTORS AND OTHER GEAR TO ENTER AIRCRAFT. TEN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS ENTERED PLANE, COLLECTED ALL PASSPORTS, CHECKED THEM AGAINST PASSENGER LIST AND SUBSEQUENTLY RETURNED THEM WITHOUT COMMENT. PASSENGERS COMMENTED YEMENI OFFICIALS HAD BEEN COURTEOUS AND THERE NO SUGGESTION THEY LOOKING FOR PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS. YEMENI OFFICIALS ALSO ALLEGEDLY REMARKED YEMEN HAD CLOSED AIR SPACE TO WESTERN AIRCRAFT.

5. AFTER THREE HOURS, FLIGHT CONTINUED ON TO NAIROBI WHERE NORMAL CREW CHANGEOVER TOOK PLACE. FLIGHT ARRIVED JOHANNESBURG 8:35 P.M. (S.A. TIME) OCTOBER 8, EIGHT AND ONE-HALF HOURS BEHIND SCHEDULE. AIRCRAFT LEFT ON RETURN FLIGHT TO LONDON ON MONDAY EVENING AT 10 P.M. LOCAL TIME.

6. ACCORDING BOAC MARKETING MANAGER JOHANNESBURG RANCE, AIRCRAFT WAS ON BAHRAIN-NAIROBI LEG OF FLIGHT WHEN YEMENI OFFICIALS REQUESTED IT LAND ADEN. YEMENIS ASSERTED AIRCRAFT HAD VIOLATED YEMEN AIR SPACE. BOAC MAINTAINS IT HAD BEEN REQUESTING OVERFLIGHT CLEARANCE FROM YEMENI AUTHORITIES BUT HAD RECEIVED NO RESPONSE. BOAC FURTHER STATES YEMENIS WERE "ABSOLUTELY CORRECT" IN THEIR TREATMENT OF PASSENGERS AND CREW AND NO RPT NO HARASSMENT OCCURRED. BOAC JOHANNESBURG HAS NO INFO ON NATIONALITY OF PASSENGERS ABOARD BUT CONFIRMS 221 WERE ON AIRCRAFT AT TIME OF FORCED LANDING. (EIGHTY-TWO PASSENGERS DISEMBARKED NAIROBI LEAVING 139 WHO CONTINUED TO JOHANNESBURG.)
DEGRACE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Reason:
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